

I Do

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"I do"

Setting: Perhaps two years after "Objects At Rest".  
>Summary: A night-time conversation and reflections later on.<br>Rating: Safe for all ages. But dark overtones, so...  
>Pairing: LiseMichael (I know, people hate it, but...) and some  
>MichaelBester, although not in any recognisable way... you'll see what I  
>mean later.<br>Archiving: Let me know first, please.  
>Disclaimer: I own nought. JMS is a rich man indeed.<br>Feedback: Feeds my muse. Esp. since this isn't a pairing covered by me  
>before...<p>

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"Do you love me?"

It's a simple enough question, with a simple enough answer. All he has to do  
>is nod, and I'll be content.<p>

I hope.

I sigh, shifting restlessly in his arms. The night-light is on, of course;  
>he won't sleep in darkness. He tries, but it scares him, I can tell. So, I<br>make up childhood demons returned since I saw him last, and leave the light  
>on to keep us both safe. He smiles, and is thankful but silent. He

won't<br>admit his fear, you see.

He won't admit anything. It scares me sometimes, how silent he is,  
how  
>unresponsive. How unimportant I must seem compared to everything  
else in his<br>life. But then, it's everything else that keeps the  
night-light on; and I am  
>the one he can welcome darkness with. I'm not entirely sure whether  
this is<br>a good thing. Can someone survive as just a security  
blanket?

Cruel, yes, I know. But I'm sure that he thinks of me this way. See -  
he  
>hesitates, and it's enough for me. I can see his face, blanketed  
in<br>half-light and star-light and the almost-morning light,  
frowning and tired.  
>And then the smile, never reaching his eyes, as he nods, and drifts  
off. I<br>can see him, even though I don't look up, because I have  
asked him this  
>question every night for two years. Every night for two years I have  
had to<br>deal with that hesitation.

I spoke to his friends about this. I was that concerned... to breach  
his  
>former life. I didn't want to, of course, because I was scared I  
might lose<br>him to them again. Lose him, and wait another five  
years before he found me  
>and hugged me close. Another five years before I could leave the  
night-light<br>on and climb under the covers, clinging to him like a  
good security blanket  
>should.<p>

Do I love him? I don't think that matters anymore. I leave the  
night-light  
>on, don't I? I think that's answer enough. And still, he hesitates.  
He'll<br>never be free of the past - he'll never embrace darkness.  
And it's not so  
>scary, you know. It's rich and moist and clings to you like warm wet  
silk,<br>draped over you in sleep. And whenever I ask, he changes the  
subject. He  
>says my hair is beautiful - raven's wing, he says. I know this means  
he<br>hates it. It's dark, almost black, and he sees night-time in  
it.

Black is a forbidden colour in our house. Even the front door is rich  
brown  
>instead.<p>

I wish he wasn't so afraid... No. It's a fool's wish, and I know it.  
I'm  
>selfish enough to want him to stay afraid, because that's the only  
way I can<br>keep him. I know that. He talks in his sleep, you see,  
and so I know what he  
>dreams. He dreams of death. Every night.<p>

I think I love him. I think. Maybe he's my security blanket as well.  
Maybe  
>I'm frightened too - perhaps just frightened of being alone. Perhaps  
willing<br>to give up the night to leave the night-light on, when I  
have no demons to

>need protecting from. So, we are both leeches - parasites, clinging to each  
<br>other to survive. It's not a pretty picture, I grant you.

He wanted me to dye my hair. Well, he didn't say it, specifically, but he  
>said I'd look nice with dark blonde hair. I wonder if he ever loved anybody  
<br>with such hair. It's dawn hair, you see - right about the time the sun is  
>behind the clouds, and in another moment will burst through them. After  
<br>that, we have golden hair, platinum hair... all the bright colours of the  
>morning in our make-believe world with our nice house and perfect jobs. No,  
<br>it's dawn hair that's the most truthful, the most innocent.

I know he hates my hair. So why does he kiss it when we climb into bed and  
>draw up the covers? Why does he draw his hand through it, playing with it  
<br>until I wake up in the morning, tangled and worn? That's what scares me  
>most. I'm selfish enough to want him scared, because it keeps him here with  
<br>me. Because if he wasn't scared, he'd run - he'd turn off the night-light,  
>and embrace the darkness. Why else would he fondle night-dark hair while in  
<br>sleep?

He has no light in his life, and I am his anchor. I relish that thought,  
>despite it's perversion. If I could tie him to me with bonds of love, I  
<br>would. I think I do love him. I do. He buries himself in darkness, but his  
>eyes still hold half-light and star-light and almost-morning light. And that  
<br>is what hurts the most, when he hesitates again.

"Do you love me?"

And still, that hesitation. His hand is in my hair, and he inhales deeply.  
>Perhaps he will comment on how it smells of evergreen, even though it  
<br>doesn't. I have accepted this. To him, dark hair smells of evergreen, with  
>liquid chocolate eyes to harden cruelly under his gaze. My eyes are hazel,  
<br>but he never seems to understand. Still, I hope.

It's the only way I can keep him to me - to ask that question each night,  
>and hope that one night there is no hesitation. To hope that when he smiles  
<br>at me, his eyes don't harden like glaciers of ice, until I freeze in them. I  
>am, after all, only a security blanket. I have no warmth of my own. I can  
<br>only hope to draw some out of him and keep myself warm.

And so, I ask, a third time. "Do you love me Michael?" And I will him to say  
>"Yes." And the answer will have no reservation, no hesitation. He will not  
<br>touch my hair again, but kiss me instead.

No, he does not say this. Once more, he hesitates, fingers tangled against

>my neck. And then, just before I give up hope and turn off the  
night-light,<br>he sighs. "Yes," he says, smiling against my cheek.  
He kisses my hair again  
>and is silent.<p>

And, up to a point, I believe him. But why would he need to kiss  
darkness  
>again? So, no, once again we deceive ourselves. We live our perfect  
lives,<br>and leave the night-light on, and ask our questions each  
night.

It would be so easy to believe him - to just close my eyes and  
drown... I  
>truly wish I could turn off the night-light tonight. I do.<p>

End "I do"

End  
file.